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Prominent Antitrust Litigator Leaves Heller for Sheppard

By **Rebecca U. Cho**
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LOS ANGELES — Prominent antitrust litigator Darryl Snider jumped from Heller Ehrman to the Los Angeles office of Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton on Wednesday, becoming the second partner this week to join Sheppard from San Francisco-based Heller.

Blaine Templeman, a New York intellectual property partner formerly with Heller, also defected for Los Angeles-based Sheppard on Monday.

Snider, 59, said the timing of his move is coincidental with last week's dissolution of merger talks between Heller Ehrman and Baker & McKenzie. He was with Heller for 10 years, joining the firm from New York-based Shearman & Sterling, which since has closed its Los Angeles office.

"This has nothing to do with Heller," Snider said. "It's just a great opportunity for me and my clients."

Heller has been on the hunt for a merger candidate this year, as partner defections from the firm have persisted. Since the beginning of the year, nearly 30 partners in California have gone to other firms.

Robert Hubbell, Heller Ehrman's managing partner, was brief in his reaction to



Snider

Snider's move, but noted that Heller continues to have a strong antitrust practice.

"I wish him the best of luck. Beyond that I'm not going to have any comment," Hubbell said.

In antitrust and securities litigations, Snider has represented Mercedes Benz of North America, KPMG, Deloitte & Touche, Masco Corp. and Altria, among others. In 2007, he successfully represented Philip Morris U.S.A. in an antitrust challenge in the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, alleging that a master settlement agreement resulted from a price-fixing conspiracy among tobacco manufacturers.

Snider said he was attracted to the high quality of Sheppard's lawyers and the firm's steady growth in antitrust litigation.

"I like their strategic vision and the fact that they have excellent lawyers, and they're doing well and growing in what is a very competitive market environment," Snider said. "That speaks volumes of the strengths of their client relationships, lawyers and their strategy."

Snider declined to comment on the size

of his book of business, but in the past, his book has been in the range of \$5 million to \$10 million. His practice also includes securities class actions, accountants' liability, mergers and acquisitions and bank litigation.

Sheppard's antitrust practice leader, Gary L. Halling, said the firm hopes to grow its antitrust bench in Los Angeles. Halling, who is based in San Francisco, said Snider's hire in Los Angeles is a boost to the 25-member practice group and to the firm.

"He has a long history of doing very significant matters for very large and important clients, whether on the East Coast, California or Europe," Halling said.

Snider said he looks forward to working out of a national firm based in Los Angeles, a new experience for him. Most of his clients are based on the East Coast or in other cities outside California, he said. He added that he hopes to take advantage of the large number of Sheppard attorneys in Los Angeles to cross-sell business and create stronger local ties.

Legal placement firm Watanabe Nason Schwartz & Lippman brokered the move.

Sheppard Mullin has about 150 attorneys in its Los Angeles office and 520 attorneys firmwide. Heller Ehrman has about 600 attorneys firmwide.